

Challenges for Labour Market of the 21st Century

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Abstract: Contemporary society is intensely aware of globalisation trends that cannot be avoided. In particular, the pandemic period in relation to the labour market has brought with it the need to master information technology. During the pandemic, many companies had to relocate employees to 'home offices'. Companies in Slovakia have managed this thanks to modern technological solutions, but it is important to realise that the home-office will not be a short-term solution and most likely this form of work will become the new standard.

Keywords: labour market, industrial revolution 4.0, home-office, shared economy, globalization, pandemic

Introduction

At the moment, the whole of society is undergoing noticeable changes, which have directly affected the labour market. The pandemic period in relation to the labour market has brought with it the need to

master information technology. Many companies have moved employees to 'home offices'. It should be understood that home-office will not be a short-term solution and most likely this form of work will become the new standard (Barancova, 2017). It offers a number of advantages that are also perceived by employers, as it can save them the cost of renting office space. However, businesses and companies need to thoroughly prepare for long-term home-office and ensure that they have the most up-to-date information systems available. In addition, it is very important to strike a balance between security and productivity when working from home. Most workers have found out that they can be more efficient in the right circumstances at the home-office, and they are comfortable with the flexibility to manage their working hours or the time saved on commuting to work. On the other hand, however, they strongly feel the loss of personal and social contact, which they sorely miss. A

combination of working a few days in the office and a few days from home therefore seems ideal.

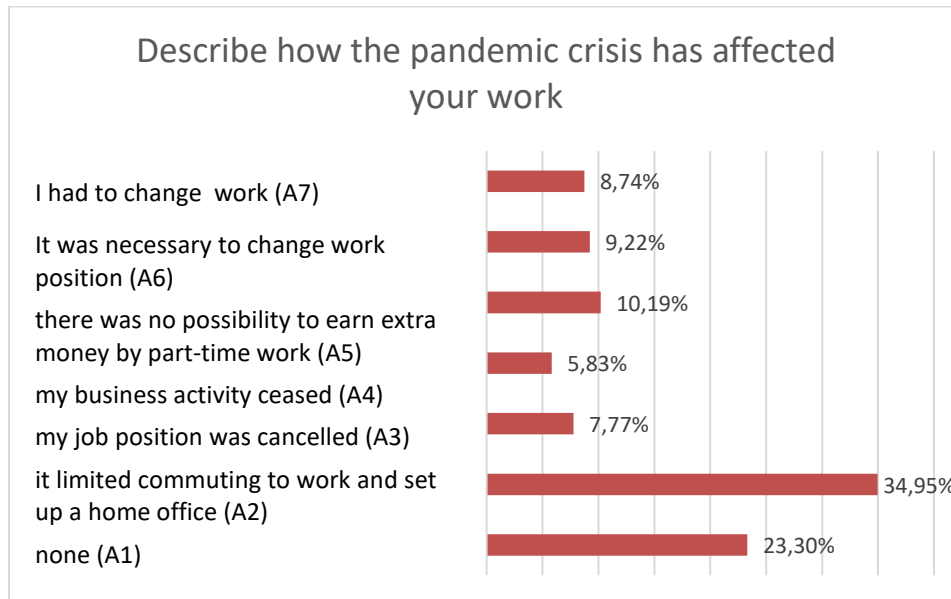
The home-office has thus opened the way for a radical transformation of the labour market, which, according to early findings, is beneficial for both employers and employees. Surveys show that the majority of employees are satisfied with their home working environment. Effective communication and the addressable use of video calls, which are a better and more personal way of communication than just a traditional phone call or email communication, have contributed to this (Barancova, 2017). The satisfaction of people working from home is most often attributed not only to greater convenience, but also to adjusting work habits, better work scheduling, not being distracted by colleagues, and saving time in commuting to work and meetings that can be resolved online. However, if the work from home is to be done to the required quality, the working environment must be comfortable and efficient for the employee. Only then can he or she deliver performance comparable to working in an office.

Methods

In the following section we present a selection of results from the research realized in early 2022 on a sample of 206 respondents in the form of an online questionnaire. The respondents represented different age groups with different levels of education from all regions of Slovakia, living in urban and rural areas, employed in different occupational segments, as well as unemployed people. The aim of the research was to highlight the changes in the labour market caused by the pandemic crisis.

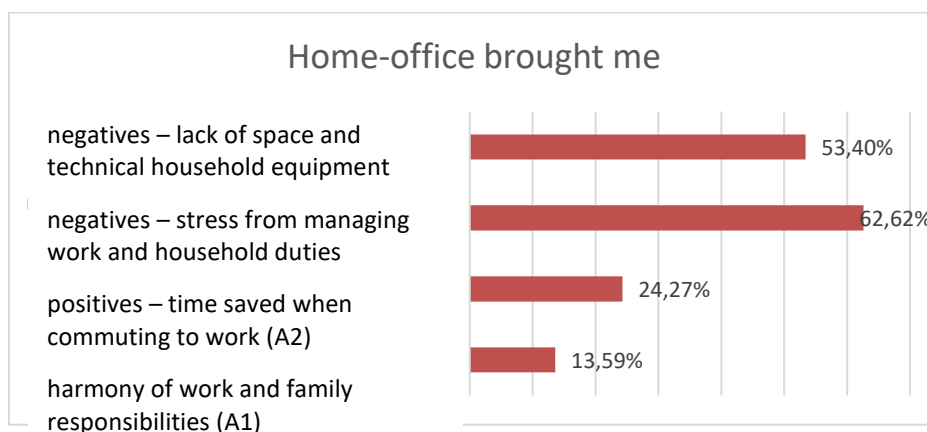
Results and discussion

In the research we conducted, we investigated, among other things, how the pandemic crisis affected the respondents' work activities. Most of the responses (34.95%) testified to the fact that the coronacrisis had restricted commuting and set home-office. Paradoxically, 23.30% of the respondents were not constrained in any way by the coronary crisis. An interesting finding was the fact that for many respondents (10.19%) there was no opportunity to earn income through part-time work at the time of the coronary crisis.



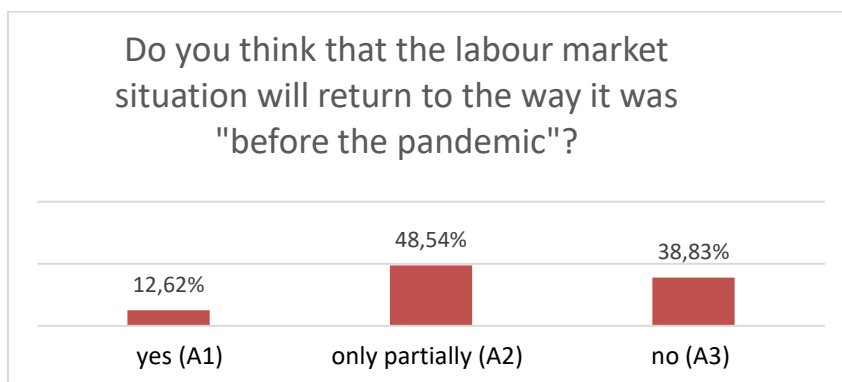
Graph 1 Describe how the pandemic crisis has affected your work

We were also interested in what respondents got out of working from home (home-office). As many as 62.62% answered that this form of work brought negatives - whether it was the stress of coping with work and home duties, or the lack of technical equipment in the "home office" (53.40%), etc. Only 13.59% of the respondents perceived the home-office as a benefit. Respondents from our research in the older age group perceived negative aspects in the home-office setting, which outweighed the benefits of this form of work. As many as 75.76% of the respondents in the age group of 40 to 50 years felt the stress of coping with work responsibilities and balancing home and family responsibilities while working from home and being constantly on call. 66.67% of the respondents in the younger age group (18 to 25 years) felt the lack of space and inadequate technical facilities while studying in a home-based environment.



Graph 2 Home-office brought me

In connection with the global perception of the coronary crisis, the next question was aimed at finding out opinions on the situation on the labour market, which is global and interconnected between individual countries, Slovakia included. The question was whether the situation on the labour market will return to its "pre-pandemic" way of functioning. From the respondents' statements we found that 48.54% of the respondents think that the labour market will return to the "pre-pandemic" situation only partially, 38.83% of the respondents are convinced that the labour market will not return to the "pre-pandemic" situation. It is thus clear from the responses that it will be necessary to adapt to the new changed conditions. The labour market is facing changes in the near future, especially regarding the structure of jobs.



Graph 3 Do you think that the labour market situation will return to the way it was "before the pandemic"?

Conclusion

The negative impact of the coronary crisis on the Slovak labour market was markedly felt by some groups of the population – people with lower qualifications, employees in occupations that cannot be performed from home. The results of the research also showed that those employees who worked on a work agreement or earned their income through temporary work lost their jobs. A new, current challenge for the labour market

brought about by the migration wave will be the multicultural labour market with its specific attributes.

It can be noted with certainty that the current phase of the economic curve will result in a significant change in consumer behaviour. It is also predicted that the workload of psychologists will increase, particularly in the field of social psychological counselling, which is of great help in the activities needed for society to

cope with the impact of the coronary crisis and also the migration crisis.

Although the ongoing coronary crisis is specific in nature, previous crises have shown that an important way of ensuring a rapid recovery of the labour market is to keep workers connected to the labour market and, as far as possible, to increase education and encourage the acquisition of new skills.

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